



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pedagogical Leadership Based On Religious Character Education At Hidayatullah Integral Elementary School: A Response To The Global Challenges Of The 21st Century

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the form of Islamic values-based pedagogical leadership implemented at SD Integral Hidayatullah Putri Hijau in addressing the global challenges of the 21st century. These challenges include moral crises, the flow of globalization, technological disruptions, and socio-cultural changes that directly affect the educational landscape. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the principal and teachers at SD Integral Hidayatullah Putri Hijau practice integrative pedagogical leadership by aligning Islamic vision with contextual learning strategies. Core values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and Islamic brotherhood serve as the foundation in decision-making processes and educational interactions. Additionally, the integration of spiritual values within the learning process, holistic character development, and the teachers' role as role models are key elements in nurturing adaptive, critical, and morally upright students. Character-based pedagogical leadership has been proven effective in establishing an educational ecosystem capable of facing contemporary challenges while maintaining Islamic identity. This study further reveals a significant correlation and regression between pedagogical leadership and the development of students' religious character, as well as their preparedness in confronting the global challenges of the 21st century.

Keyword: Pedagogical leadership; religious character education; global challenges; primary education Psychological

Introduction

Pedagogical leadership extends beyond administrative functions, focusing on how educational leaders, particularly principals and teachers, guide, nurture, and develop meaningful and transformative learning processes that align with the ideological values of their institutions. It is not merely about managing an educational institution but about creating an environment that fosters high-quality, effective, and inclusive learning. Pedagogical leaders play a crucial role in achieving educational objectives and in maximizing each individual's potential (Asmara, 2023). Within the context of Islamic schools, pedagogical leadership carries a strong spiritual and moral dimension rooted in holistic Islamic values.

The 21st century presents significant challenges for education, including rapid technological advancements, swift socio-cultural changes, character crises, and globalization that often blur the boundaries of local and religious values. The progression of science and technology has influenced various sectors, including politics, arts and culture, economics, and the dynamic transformation within education itself, as the world moves into the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 (Fati et al., 2024). Schools are therefore expected not only to produce intellectually capable students but also to develop individuals with strong character, noble morals, and critical and adaptive thinking skills. Character education involves learning processes that incorporate essential principles and values for daily life, including cooperation, empathy, integrity, responsibility, respect, and justice (Mardiyanto, 2024).

SD Integral Hidayatullah Putri Hijau, as an integrated Islamic educational institution, endeavors to address these challenges through pedagogical leadership grounded in Islamic values. This

leadership is demonstrated through role modeling, the habitual practice of Islamic values in daily school activities, and the integration of these values within both the learning process and policy-making.

This study aims to examine the forms and implementation of pedagogical leadership based on religious character education at SD Integral Hidayatullah Putri Hijau, as well as to explore how these strategies serve as a response to the global challenges of the 21st century. This analysis is significant in providing a concrete perspective on how Islamic schools can remain relevant and excel amidst the dynamics of contemporary times while preserving their core identities and values.

21st-century learning is designed to equip younger generations to face increasingly complex global challenges and demands. The rapid advancement of information and technology has significantly impacted the field of education. Education plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of human life and fostering the progress of nations. Changes in 21st-century education are marked by the development of new forms of literacy, such as information literacy, digital literacy, and media literacy. Learning is no longer solely focused on mastering subject content but emphasizes the development of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. The learning process now prioritizes the active engagement of students, with teachers serving as facilitators who provide stimuli, guidance, and motivation, enabling students to construct their own knowledge through cognitive activities. As noted by Azzahra et al. (2025), learning is not merely about knowledge transfer but constitutes a process of knowledge construction by the students themselves.

Consequently, 21st-century learning systems shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches. This approach aims to equip students with essential 21st-century competencies known as the 4C Skills, as formulated in the Framework for 21st Century Skills. These four skills include: (1) communication, (2) collaboration, (3) critical thinking and problem-solving, and (4) creativity and innovation (Nabilah & Nana, 2020). According to Kuncahyono (2020) in *Lectura: Jurnal Pendidikan* (Vol. 12 No. 1), implementing 21st-century learning requires flexible learning processes that are not limited by space and time. This condition positions technology integration as a key element in the learning process, functioning not

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only as a supportive tool but also as a medium to develop adaptive learning skills. Today's education system is required to continuously innovate, encompassing the development of learning materials, the utilization of instructional media, the provision of adequate facilities, and the advancement of learning models that are responsive to the demands of the era and the intensifying global competition.

Method

This study employs a mixed-method approach, incorporating quantitative analysis through correlation and regression alongside a descriptive qualitative approach. As noted by Sugiyono (2022), the qualitative approach emphasizes understanding phenomena naturally within real-life contexts. Accordingly, the data collected are naturalistic, obtained directly from field situations rather than laboratory experiments, thereby reflecting the actual conditions in the studied environment.

Results and Discussion

TABEL 1. HASIL ANALISIS KORELASI					
Varabel X	Varabel Y	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Kekuatan Hubungan	Keterangan
X1.1	Y1.1	0.442	0.013	Sedang	Signifikan
X1.2	Y1.2	0.371	0.044	Rendah	Signifikan
X1.3	Y1.3	0.267	0.160	Rendah	Tidak signifi
X1.4	Y1.4	0.260	0.172	Rendah	Tidak signifi
X1.5	Y1.5	0.473	0.007	Sedang	Signifikan
X1.6	Y1.6	0.463	0.008	Sedang	Signifikan
X1.7	Y1.7	0.370	0.045	Rendah	Signifikan
X2.1	Y2.1	0.378	0.040	Rendah	Signifikan
X2.2	Y2.2	0.344	0.065	Rendah	Tidak signifi
X2.3	Y2.3	0.488	0.005	Sedang	Signifikan
X2.4	Y2.4	0.356	0.056	Rendah	Tidak signifi
X2.5	Y2.5	0.439	0.014	Sedang	Signifikan
X2.6	Y2.6	0.456	0.009	Sedang	Signifikan
X2.7	Y2.7	0.432	0.016	Sedang	Signifikan
X3.1	Y3.1	0.530	0.002	Kuat	Signifikan
X3.2	Y3.2	0.490	0.005	Sedang	Signifikan
X3.3	Y3.3	0.462	0.008	Sedang	Signifikan

Table 1 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients, indicating a significant relationship between pedagogical leadership variables (X) and religious character (Y1) as well as preparedness for 21st-century global challenges (Y2). The correlation values range between 0.300 and 0.700, indicating moderate to strong relationships. These findings reinforce the evidence that dimensions of pedagogical leadership, such as role modeling, effective communication, and value reinforcement, contribute substantially to shaping students' religious character and readiness to face global challenges in the 21st century. As noted by Yusaini (2020), pedagogical leadership plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and personality.

The regression analysis results indicate an R value of 0.656, reflecting a strong relationship between the independent variables (Y1 and Y2) and the dependent variable (X). The R Square value of 0.430 suggests that 43% of the variance in pedagogical leadership can be explained jointly by religious character and preparedness for 21st-century global challenges.

Additionally, the significance value (0.001 < 0.05) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant, demonstrating that Y1 and Y2 collectively have a significant influence on pedagogical leadership. Further, the t-test results indicate that pedagogical leadership has a significant positive effect on religious character, implying that higher levels of pedagogical leadership correlate with stronger religious character among students. However, pedagogical leadership does not significantly impact preparedness for 21st-century global challenges, as indicated by a significance value above 0.05, suggesting that the internalization of pedagogical leadership within practical contexts requires further strengthening.

Effective and strong pedagogical leadership plays a strategic role in enhancing educational quality, fostering student development, and supporting overall school success (Asmara, 2023). At SD Integral Hidayatullah Putri Hijau, Islamic values-based leadership prioritizes not only academic achievement but also character building, spirituality, and moral development aligned with Islamic teachings,

with principals and teachers acting as role models (uswah hasanah), motivators, facilitators, and moral guides in the learning process. Principles such as honesty, responsibility, humility, brotherhood, and trustworthiness form the foundation for decision-making and instructional practices within the school. These values are internalized holistically through the school's vision, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and daily practices, including communal prayers, Quran recitation, and etiquette in social interactions. School leaders and teachers consistently demonstrate exemplary behavior in worship, discipline, and social conduct, forming the backbone of a school culture rooted in Islamic values (Sutrisno, 2024). Positive habits are cultivated daily through practices such as reciting prayers, maintaining cleanliness, and demonstrating good character, aligning educational objectives with both vertical (relationship with God) and horizontal (relationship with others) principles (Asmara, 2024). The curriculum integrates general and Islamic knowledge using a thematic approach, ensuring each subject connects to Islamic values, such as appreciating Allah's creation in science lessons (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Teachers adopt humanistic and spiritual learning approaches to guide students in understanding the wisdom behind knowledge, fostering gratitude, self-awareness, and spiritual responsibility. In responding to 21st-century challenges, the school emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (4C) as essential competencies for navigating technological disruptions and societal complexities (Fati, 2024), while maintaining Islamic identity and digital literacy. Structured programs such as Islamic mentoring, Quran memorization, and social services further support character development and reflective, Quranic-based education. The impact of this pedagogical leadership is evident in the nurturing of an Islamic, educational school culture; the formation of students with spiritual awareness, social responsibility, and balanced academic achievement; and the development of high teacher motivation rooted in spiritual dedication. Additionally, the school demonstrates adaptability to technological advancements while consistently upholding Islamic values, ensuring that innovation in education aligns with its mission to develop students with strong akhlaq and spiritual integrity

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Islamic values-based pedagogical leadership at SD Integral Hidayatullah Putri Hijau plays a strategic role in enhancing educational quality, fostering religious character, and preparing students to face the challenges of the 21st century. Pedagogical leadership in this context extends beyond academic achievement, emphasizing character building, spirituality, and social responsibility through role modeling, the daily practice of Islamic values, and the integration of these values within learning processes and policy development. The correlation analysis indicates a significant relationship between pedagogical leadership and students' religious character, while also showing a moderate relationship with preparedness for 21st-century global challenges, despite requiring further strengthening in practical internalization. The implementation of pedagogical leadership has succeeded in fostering an Islamic, nurturing, and educational school culture, increasing teacher and staff motivation to serve as educators and role models, and maintaining the school's Islamic identity amidst technological advancements. Therefore, effective and strong pedagogical leadership serves as a crucial foundation for developing a generation that is not only intellectually competent but also possesses noble character, strong spirituality, and critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative skills necessary to navigate the dynamics of the 21st century.

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